



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**B. Todd Jones,
United States Attorney**

Jeanne F. Cooney, Director of Community Relations
(612) 664-5611
e-mail: jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 17, 2009
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/MN

Prior Lake man sentenced for distributing Xanax and Oxycontin

The owner of a pharmaceutical company that collects and disposes of outdated, recalled, or excess prescription drugs was sentenced today in federal court for selling Xanax and Oxycontin. In Minneapolis, United States District Court Judge James Rosenbaum sentenced Mark Andrew Goetz, 41, Prior Lake, to 48 months in prison on one count of distribution of controlled substances. Goetz was indicted on May 20, 2009, and pleaded guilty on July 28, 2009.

Goetz owns Pharmaceutical Returns, a Northfield, Minnesota, company approved by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") as a reverse distributor of controlled substances. As such, the company is authorized to collect controlled substances, return them to drug companies for credit, or destroy them at approved incinerators. In pleading guilty, however, Goetz admitted that on January 10, 2009, he sold 99 tablets of Xanax, and on May 6, 2009, he sold 245 tablets of Xanax and 1,274 tablets of Oxycontin.

"Twenty-five percent of drug-related emergency room visits are associated with the abuse of prescription drugs," said Gary G. Olenkiewicz, special agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration's Chicago Field Division, which includes Minnesota. "As a reverse distributor, Mr. Goetz had the responsibility to return controlled substances to the manufacturer or destroy them. Instead, he chose to make a profit from them on the black market, which makes him no different than a street dealer pushing cocaine or heroin."

In January 2009, investigators learned Goetz was selling prescription drugs he acquired through his business. As a result, law enforcement arranged a controlled buy of 99 Xanax tablets from Goetz on January 10. The transaction occurred at his residence. Then, law enforcement arranged a second controlled buy on May 6. That transaction, which occurred in the parking lot

of a south Minneapolis apartment complex, was for 245 Xanax tablets and 1,274 Oxycontin tablets. After the transaction, Goetz proceeded to leave the premises, at which time, he was stopped by authorities. They seized a small amount of a controlled substance and a laptop computer.

This case was the result of an investigation by the DEA. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas M. Hollenhorst.